

USS HIGGINS (DDG 76) Command Vision & Philosophy

It is only natural to experience some anxiety when reporting to a new duty station or receiving a new commanding officer, and adjusting to a new way of doing business. As your Captain, it is important for me to let you know how I will expect you to do business and what you can expect from me in return. I want you to understand what is important to me. You can then be more at ease and we can begin to work together as a team.

Our Vision

To be combat ready for any challenge and prevail.

Our Philosophy

I operate and live my life by three general principles...

Honesty: Always place honor above self. I do not lie, cheat, or steal nor tolerate those who do. I expect the same from you. I will let you know what I know and the "why" behind it whenever I can. Tell me what you know, what you don't know, and what you think. Don't do or say anything that you would be embarrassed to tell me about.

Integrity: A prized possession with which every individual is born with and can never be taken away. Only you can give away your integrity, and with it, your sense of honor. Integrity enables you to "do the right thing." When faced with a difficult decision, ask yourself "what should I do?" Never compromise your integrity. Follow your gut instinct to speak and act in a moral manner. If you have questions about whether something is appropriate, ask. We will also strive to align word and deed throughout the command to achieve consistency. There are no double standards!

Trust: It is the most important principle in attaining mutual respect, understanding, and commitment. I trust you to do your job. Trust me as your Commanding Officer. I will consult with you when I can, but when I cannot, I will always make decisions in the best interest of our command. I ask you to do the same – *take care of our ship, shipmates, and don't surprise me.*

As we work together, you will see that everything I do is based on these three principles. In addition to these three principles, here are some guidelines I would like you to follow. They are:

Teamwork: My #1 priority. You make HIGGINS what she is... Without you, she goes no where and does nothing. Your contribution is important no matter how big or small, it all matters. Get to know your shipmates and look out for them. We treat each other with loyalty, dignity, courtesy, and respect. Diversity is treasured as a cornerstone of what makes our Navy great. Your family counts! Take care of them, keep them "in the loop," and make them part of the team -- they are! And they'll be with you long after the Navy.

Be Proactive: Anticipate the schedule and take early action. Do today what can be put off until tomorrow. Act on situations and opportunities rather than wait to be acted upon. This deterministic approach makes life easier to keep up with rather than always trying to catch up.

Do your best: Sprout wherever you are planted aboard HIGGINS! Set your standards high and grow professionally and personally. I expect your best during every evolution. You can count on mine. Never settle for the minimum nor walk by a problem or deficiency anywhere on the ship. Correct it on the spot or propose a solution. We are all in this together! I believe in you; I trust you; I want you to succeed and will do everything I can to nurture that success as part of the winning team in HIGGINS. As the warship to honorably bear Marine Colonel William "Rich" Higgins' name, we will always lead from the front with moral courage and valor in both peace and war. The world is on notice: those who threaten America's interests or dare terrorize its citizens will face Colonel Rich Higgins and the 8,300 tons of pure American steel that now surround his spirit.

*** **TRUST in TEAMWORK** ***

CDR Fred W. Smith, Jr., USN
Commanding Officer